

Winter's Eve by orphan_account

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Christmas Vibes, F/M, Very fluffy, quite trope-y

Language: English

Characters: Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Jonathan Byers & Nancy Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler

Status: Completed

Published: 2016-12-25

Updated: 2016-12-25

Packaged: 2022-04-02 00:19:45

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,625

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Nancy goes to the Byers' home to pick up Mike, and ends up engaged in a snowball fight.

Winter's Eve

The little strips of clear scotch tape were half stuck to the rail of her footboard, one sticky end free and ready to be grabbed at a moment's notice. Nancy folded the blue and white snow fake print wrapping paper along the edge of the box and tucked the point neatly against the flat side of the gift. She smoothed a tidy curl of chestnut hair behind her ear and reached for a small strip of tape.

"Nance?" The call came up the stairs, then in sing-song, "Na-ance"

"Yeah?" She called back, sticking down some more wrapping paper.

There were soft footfalls on the stairs, then a gentle knock at her door. "Nance?"

Why couldn't her mom just shout whatever she had to say up the stairs as well? "Come in."

Karen Wheeler cracked the door open, dark blond hair arranged perfectly, unblemished apron over a pair of pressed tan slacks and a fuchsia pussy-bow blouse. "Sweetie, would you mind going and getting your brother? He's supposed to be up at the Byers'. It's starting to get dark and I don't want him walking home alone."

"Uh..." Nancy looked about at the wrapping paper, ribbons, bows, gifts, tissue paper, scissors and tape ranged over her bed, desk, and floor. She supposed she could just come back to it later. "Yeah, sure thing mom."

"Thanks, honey." Her mom turned to leave, "Oh, and we're having pot roast for dinner. Would you prefer potatoes or garlic bread with it?"

"Umm..." She distractedly reached for a gift tag, boarded with illustrated colorful Christmas lights all along the borders. "Potatoes sound good."

"Alright, well, we'll eat at seven. Your dad should be back by then."

"Mmm hmm." Nancy intoned as Karen returned back down the stairs.

Carefully she inked her inscription on the tag. "To: Jon, From: Nancy". She studied the tag for a prolonged moment; strange, she thought. Then, quickly, she taped the tag to the gift, and slid the box under her bed.

Nancy opened her closet and began to pile on the outerwear. It was cold in Indiana, and there was more than enough snow on the ground to prove it. Sweater, coat, scarf, hat, boots, gloves. It was a lot of fuss to go through to walk the half mile to the Byers' house, but the conditions demanded it.

And besides she didn't really mind. In the time since she had learned of the upside down, and seen what could happen to those you loved, she had grown closer to her little brother. Mike had been resistant at first, but she had persevered in her quest to win him over and eventually wore him down. All those years of their mom interrupting their quarrels with a shout of "for the love of God, you only have each other!" had finally sunk in for her. Seeing what had happened to little Will Byers, seeing how his disappearance had affected his family, made her appreciate her own little brother even more. Loved ones were the only thing that truly mattered in this life. And well, she loved her goofy, geeky, brilliant little brother.

As she walked up the hill to the top of their street, Nancy could already see that the sun was beginning its decent, less of a languid journey now in the winter than it had been in the summer months. But, it wouldn't even start getting dark for a little while now, she had plenty of time.

However, where she had strengthened one relationship, another had suffered. Only a week ago she had met with Steve at his house, heart in throat, and had an honest discussion. She had fought much within herself about it, and had very nearly talked herself out of the confession altogether. But, she had to be honest with him. She loved him, dearly, but the romance just wasn't there anymore.

His response had been a simple hung head, then a nod. "Yeah, I know, Nance." Then a sigh. "I love you too... and you'll always be special to me... but," he had looked up at her, a reluctant smirk on his face that made her eyes glisten, why couldn't she love him like the way she had wanted to?

“But?” Her voice had quivered, and she could feel the tip of her nose and apples of her cheeks burning.

“But, you’re right. The romance isn’t there.”

He had kissed her forehead before she had left, rubbing a thumb over her temple. “Don’t be a stranger, Nance.”

And she hadn’t been. Sure, it had been weird, but they had gone through something which would inexplicably link them for the rest of their lives. She was convinced of that. You didn’t fight an otherworldly monster together and then simply split paths forever.

Her boots crunched over the unplowed snow as she trudge along the familiar route. It was bitterly cold out, but blissfully silent and peaceful. She shoved her gloved hands deep into the pockets of her winter coat and felt her fingers brush against something. Without removing the object she already knew what it was, as her fingers curled around the form. A switchblade. “Small, effective, and better than nothing.” Or at least that was what Steve had said when he had given it to her.

An unbidden smile, melancholy and nostalgic, painted itself over her features and she rubbed the blade’s casing with her thumb.

“Watch out!”

Floof.

Nancy rubbed her head and was met only with the powder dusted over her hat, the folds of her scarf and the shoulder of her coat. She cast an eye about to find out where the voice and white missile had come from.

Dustin emerged from the trees lining the driveway up the Byers’ home, light brown curls just barely contained under a striped beanie. “Sorry, Nancy,” He spread his hands apologetically. “I tried to warn you.”

“Do I still get a point?” Lucas asked as he came out of the trees on the other side of the path.

“No way, Lucas!” Dustin protested.

“I hit a target.”

“Nancy isn’t even playing with us.”

“So?”

“So, that isn’t in the rules.”

“Oh, I’m sorry,” Lucas assumed a sarcastic tone as he crossed his ropey arms over his chest, “were we playing with a set of agreed rules?”

“Boys.”

Their collective attention snapped to the source of the new voice. Jonathan was loping down the path in his sole jacket, the high roll of a knit turtle neck just visible under the collar. Between his gloved palms he was pressing fistfuls of snow. “You know full well what the rules are. You only get points for hitting someone on an opposing team. Now, since I’m with Lucas and Will, it looks like Nancy is with Mike and Dustin.”

Her eyes zeroed in on the snow in his hand, which was being turned and fashioned.

With a flash of a smirk, Nancy made a dash for it, darting into the woods and beyond Dustin. Casting a look over her shoulder she could see Jonathan coming up fast on her heels while Dustin and Lucas had retreated and Dustin was stooping to form another snowball.

“Think fast, Wheeler!” She heard his voice call.

“Don’t- you- dare!” She gasped between heavy breaths as she ran, darting past the trees that appeared in her path

She felt the snowball catch her on the back of her left thigh, then dropped to quickly scoop up some snow between her hands. She glanced about and found Jonathan was doing the same. “You’ll pay for that!” Nancy laughed, moving quickly to make a sturdy snowball.

“Not if I get you first.” He was just starting to stand now and she knew she had run out of time. The snow between her hands wasn’t packed hard enough, and her snowball was useless, unlike the one grasped in his own.

“Not so fast, Jonathan!” Came a lispy voice behind him, and Jonathan turned to look, as did Nancy. He attempted to duck but it was too late, Dustin had pelted him with a snowball.

Nancy took the opportunity to continue packing her own snowball, while Jonathan chucked his own at the middle schooler as he fled the scene. It was a miss, and crashed instead into the trunk of a nearby tree.

She stood now, pressing the snow into a compacted, heavy ball. It was then that Jonathan faced her, mousy brown hair slightly damp and clinging to his forehead. There was a mischievous glint to his eye and a wicked twist to his lip. What could he be up to?

“Don’t do it Nance.” He said, teasing.

Suspicious of him, she hesitated a moment before she hurled the snowball at him, catching him on the shoulder. He stooped and gathered a pile of snow between his hands, not bothering to compact it, he stood and advanced.

“Wha-“ She backed up, but remained facing him. Just what was he planning to do? “Jon?”

He reached her in a few strides, and before she could make a get-away, he had one hand around her shoulders, and was using the other to press snow down below the collar of her coat. “Jonathan!” She shrieked, laughing against the cold that seeped down her neck.

It only took her a split second for her to reach up above them and tug on a tree branch, letting loose a heavy fluttering snow. Still laughing, Nancy pushed at Jonathan, she needed to find a way to make payback.

But his grip on her only tightened. His eyes were searching hers, and her giggle caught in her throat. He’d never looked at her like that, so

intently. Well, maybe once he had, on the sofa in his house. Her eyes flickered to his lips for a heartbeat, and she could feel her pace quicken with a combination of embarrassment and something else. Nerves, maybe. Then, haltingly, he bent to brush his lips against hers.

She lifted a hand to rest on his arm. "Jon," She whispered, her lashes fluttering, unsure of where to direct her gaze.

"Sorry." Came his own horse whisper, as he stepped back from her.

Afraid she'd given him the wrong impression, she moved in step with him to balance on tip toe and press a kiss to his cheek, her fingers tangling with his briefly. "Come on." She said, moving past him. "I'm supposed to be bringing Mike home."

Nancy didn't have to look to know that Jonathan was only a half a step behind her. Eventually he quickened his pace to walk beside her toward the Byers' house. The silence between them wasn't uncomfortable, it never was.

As they trudged through the snow blanketed woods back to the small home, Nancy noted that the sun had lowered considerably in the sky and that the light was already half gone behind the heavy cloud coverage.

"I don't see the boys anywhere." She remarked as they closed in on the clearing around the house.

Jonathan cast an eye about as well, "They may have gone inside." He led the way across the clearing and up the steps to the front door, where they stamped the snow off of their boots on the porch. There, scattered to either side of the door, were hastily discarded pairs of small boots. Nancy stepped out of her own and hurried into the warmth of the home.

"There you two are." Joyce said from the dining room, where the boys were seated about the table with a mug before each of them. "Come in, I'll get you each some cocoa."

"Thanks, Ms. Byers," Nancy began, "But I'm supposed to be bringing Mike home."

Joyce grinned, "You've got to be freezing, come on, warm up with some cocoa. Jon, get her coat." She motioned to her son.

Jonathan helped Nancy out of her coat and found some room for it on the already laden coat rack. She plucked her hat from her head and shoved it in her coat pocket, before self-consciously smoothing her hair with her hands.

They joined the boys at the table and some cocoa was brought in. The younger boys were bragging about their scores and replaying some of their better snowball battles. All four were rosy-cheeked and a little heavy-lidded from the exertion. Nancy suspected that she looked much the same. Except the color in her cheeks was also related to something else that had happened in the woods.

She had always suspected that Jonathan had a thing for her, but in the past month she had begun to doubt her instincts. For some reason that had only made her all the more fascinated with him. A part of her was embarrassed with herself, she had only broken it off with Steve a week ago. But it felt so natural, so easy with Jonathan.

"Did you score any points, Nancy?" Asked Mike suddenly.

"Only one, I think." She cupped her hands around the warm ceramic mug before her, her frozen fingers greeting the warmth with thanks. "How about you?"

"Nine." He beamed. "Man, Lucas is so easy to get."

She sipped at her cocoa and glanced across at Jonathan, "And how many points did you get?"

His nose wrinkled with a smirk, "Not sure... maybe four or five. I wasn't keeping count."

"Oh man, I beat you so bad!" Will called down from the other end of the table. "Twelve! Twelve points. "Dustin is sooooo sloooooow."

"Am not!" Dustin protested with a wide hand gesture.

Sipping the last of her cocoa, Nancy stood. "Mike, are you ready to go?"

“I have to get my stuff from Will’s room.”

The boys all got up and Will led the way to his room at the back of the house. Jonathan rounded the table and walked with Nancy back to the front door, fetching down her coat from the rack. He held the garment wide so she could slip into it, her back to him. “Earlier...” He said over her shoulder in a low voice, “I didn’t mean to-“

“It was... nice.” She cut him off, as she turned to face him. “Really.”

“Oh?” Beyond the hair that was drying against his forehead she could see his brows raised in surprise.

“Yeah.” Surreptitiously she cast an eye about, making sure no one was around, before she found his hand with her own.

Then the palm of his free hand was on her cheek, just above her jawline, his thumb warm against the curve of her ear, and his fingers sliding into her hair. She tilted her head against his hand and then he was kissing her, an honest kiss. Brief, but passionate enough to send the warm feeling all throughout her body.

They broke apart and Nancy looked up at him with a grin, her hand still in his. “That was nice too.”

He chuckled lightly, and she realized he was just as nervous as her.

There was a clatter in the kitchen and they stepped apart. “You good in there mom?” Jonathan asked as Nancy tugged on her hat.

“Fine, fine.” Came Joyce’s slightly frazzled voice. “Just getting dinner started.”

The boys were trooping back into the living room now, with backpacks and binders and walkie-talkies. Nancy got down Mike’s coat and handed it off to him. “Well, we better be off now.” She said to Jonathan, then called out, “Thank you for the cocoa Ms. Byers.”

“No problem!” Was the response from the kitchen.

Mike was saying his goodbyes to his friends and promising to get on the walkie-talkie tonight after dinner.

“See you around, Nance.”

“Merry Christmas, Jon.” Nancy said as she ushered Mike through the door, and into the waning light of a winter’s evening.